

This map shows why Yap and the Marshall Islands are points vital to American interests in the Pacific

WHEN the League of Nations, carrying out the terms of a secret treaty, assigned to Japan not only Yap but all the German possessions in the Pacific north of the Equator, there developed a threat to the prestige of the United States and her interests in the Pacific.

To allow Japan full possession and control of her mandate would increase the certainty of being involved in any future wars in the Pacific.

Our possession, the Hawaiian Islands, with its port of Honolulu, may be considered as the center of a wheel around which rotates the entire Pacific Ocean. Or let us consider it as the heart from which pulsates the blood of the trade routes of the Pacific. To give the Marshall Islands to Japan means to bring Japan as close to Honolulu as is any of our Pacific Coast ports.

In spite of all the discussions of international disarmament, the fact remains that no actual steps toward disarmament have been taken and, under the circumstances and conditions of the present, it is our duty to study carefully all the elements and factors of every problem which in any way may affect our vital national interests. Cer-

What Yap Means Strategically

By E. E. Spafford

Chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee of the American Legion

tainly it is our duty to recognize fully the significance of such problems. The naval strategist, therefore, realizes that the Marshall Islands and the Caroline Islands, including Yap, stretch out as a menace to us along the southerly route to the Philippines. He believes that these islands mean nothing to Japan except as an assurance of security to her in the event of war in the Pacific.

The naval expert's point of view is that in case of such a war, however remote such a possibility may appear now, Japan would probably strike first and in two directions—for the Philippines to the southward and for an advanced base in the Aleutian Islands. We would try to assemble our troops and naval forces in Honolulu. However, while we were getting ready it is

safe to say that we would have lost the Philippines; from Guam we would be operating our submarines on the flank of Japan's line of communication to her strongly fortified base, Formosa, and from there to the Philippines.

The only way we could retake the Philippines would be by straight attack with troops and it requires no imagination to figure the billions of dollars which would have to be spent and thousands of lives which would be lost before the Caroline and Marshall Islands were in the hands of the United States.

No one would head for the Philippines until the bases among the islands en route had all been reduced and no American would rest content while one foot of territory taken from us by conquest remained in enemy hands.

The internationalization of Yap would mean that it would not fall exclusively under Japanese influence but would mean also that in time of emergency it would not be in the hands of the United States. The naval expert believes it necessary for the complete peace of mind of this country that the mandate not only of Yap, but of the Caroline and Marshall groups of islands, be given to the United States.

What's All This Yap Business About?

By John Spencer Bassett

Secretary, American Historical Association

TWO cables cross the Pacific Ocean from North America to the Continent of Asia. One, a British enterprise, goes from Vancouver to Australia and New Zealand. The other starts at San Francisco and runs to Honolulu, the Midway Island and Guam. Thence it proceeds to the Island of Yap, formerly a German possession, and beyond that to Shanghai, in China. The section from Guam to Shanghai, through Yap, was owned by Germany before the war, but it fell into the hands of Japan when she seized the island possessions of Germany after she entered the war, and she promptly took up a section of the cable near Shanghai and deflected it to the Loo Choo Islands, near Formosa, which are Japanese possessions. From Yap a branch cable line extends to Menado, in the Celebes, a portion of the Dutch East Indies. Yap, therefore, it can readily be understood, is an important pivot in the cable system of the Pacific Ocean.

When the Island of Yap was in the hands of Germany there was complaint that American trade secrets leaked out here to the serious damage of our business. When American orders were delivered by cable, copies of them would find their way to German merchants who, seeing what our business men were doing, would be able to anticipate it in their dealings. When Japan took the cable into her hands the situation was not improved. It is the general testimony of persons who have had business relations with the subjects of the Mikado that they will bear watching. Few business men believe they will operate the cable with more impartiality than was shown by the Germans in their operation of it.

Early in 1917, when it was evident to shrewd observers that the United States was about to be drawn into the war, Japan opened negotiations with Great Britain, with the result that it was agreed that in the final peace

Japan should have the islands taken from Germany lying north of the equator and Britain should have those lying south of the equator. The agreement was secret and the haste with which it was carried through at that particular time seems to indicate that Japan foresaw that the United States would object to the arrangement, if it were in the war when peace was made. Neither party revealed the existence of this treaty to our government when we went to their aid against Germany, although they must have known that it would be an important point in the final discussion of peace.

Strictly speaking, Great Britain had no right to assign the Pacific Islands in advance of final negotiations. What Japan got from her, therefore, was merely a promise that Britain would support her and she would support Britain in this division. Japan realized the weakness of this design and appealed to France to ratify the agree-

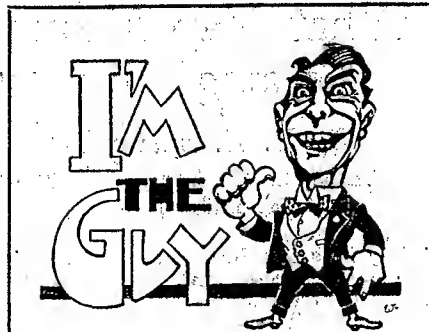
ment made between Britain and Japan and the appeal was granted. At that time the submarine menace was at its worst and Japan offered to send some of her submarines to operate in the Mediterranean. Neither Britain nor France was willing to offend her in a matter which, at the time, was considered small in comparison with the great issues at stake.

There is some dispute about when the Government of the United States learned that the islands of the Pacific had been divided before we entered the war. There is reason to believe that President Wilson had the information unofficially before he arrived at the Peace Conference. For all that it was a dramatic moment in the Supreme Council when he moved to take up the disposition of these islands. There was a pause and silence in the Council. And then the British representative observed that the subject called up by the American president had already been disposed of. In the face of this arrangement it was useless to protest. But the fact remains that the German islands, although seized by Japan, were, in reality, not conquered by Japan. In that war nothing was won until all was won. If the United States had not gone into the war, it is not likely that Japan would have been in a position to claim any of these colonies. For every portion of territory taken from Germany all the allied and associated powers had equal grounds to share in the disposal. Strictly speaking, therefore, Great Britain, France and Japan had no right to determine beforehand by secret treaty what should be done in this particular matter. And if the secret treaty was made by these three states, it ought to have been considered in abeyance, as soon as the United States became a party to the struggle. President Wilson does not seem to have insisted on this right at Paris, but he did nothing to relinquish it.

He did, however, in the discussions of April 21st and 30th and May 1st make specific protest against giving up Yap to Japan, and with the aid of Secretary Lansing offered memoranda to that effect. On May 7th the Supreme Council voted to assign mandates to the Islands north of the equator to Japan, nothing being said about Yap. President Wilson did not, at the time, have it put into the minutes that Yap was to be an exception; but he contends that, in the former discussions of the point, it was said and permitted to go without dispute that Yap was reserved for the consideration of the International Communications Conference, to which was referred the general subject of cables. It is certain that the Japanese knew well that the reservation of Yap to that conference was under discussion, and they made no protest on that point when the general disposition of the islands was voted. If they had not acquiesced in the former oral disposition of the matter they should at this time have raised the point for settlement.

Late in 1920 the International Communications Conference was in session in Washington. What to do about Yap was one of the serious matters before it. The industrious Japanese had already got the British government and the Supreme Council of the allies to confirm the decision of May 7th, and

they had prepared terms under which they were to administer their mandate islands. These terms were submitted to the Council of the League of Nations and by it approved on December 17th, 1920. When, therefore, the Communications Conference in Washington turned to Yap, Japan was complacent. She had taken due precautions, she was in full possession of Yap, and she had lost no opportunity to make her title legal so far as was consistent with her theory of her rights. Her one point of weakness was in the fact that the United States had not consented to forego its claim to the islands, arising out of its participation in the process by which Germany was forced to give up her claim to them. Under the circumstances the Conference could not



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budge the Japanese, and it adjourned without settling the question of the Pacific cables.

Then the United States made a protest. The body that had assigned the mandates to Japan was the League of Nations. In the later discussions France and probably other nations were disposed to look on the Yap dispute as a thing to be settled between Washington and Tokio. The United States never admitted this view. It considered its case as lying with the nations that had been associated with it in the war. February 22, 1921, Secretary Colby protested to the Council of the League, then in session in Paris, against its action of December 17th in assigning Yap to Japan, which, he said, violated the rights of the United States and was not lawful. He contended that the failure of the United States to ratify the Treaty of Versailles left it with its rights as a victor undiminished and that it was not bound by recent actions under that treaty. To Secretary Colby's protest the Council of the League replied that its action on December 17th had only been to approve the recommendations of the Supreme Council of the Allies, the inference being

that it was to that body that the American protest should go.

At this stage of affairs Mr. Hughes became Secretary of State. His view of the matter did not differ from that of his predecessor. In fact, the outgoing administration had been careful to act with regard for what its successors might wish to do in the case. As early as December 10th, 1920, it had submitted the entire correspondence and other documents in the case to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and repeated consideration had been given to them. It was announced in the press that the committee approved Secretary Colby's course unanimously. Mr. Hughes, therefore, began his secretaryship in a position to understand and carry on the Yap negotiations without a jar.

His first move was on April 5th. Accepting the hint of the Council of the League of Nations that the matter lay with the allied nations he sent, on April 5th, 1921, an identical note on the question of mandates to Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan. He indorsed explicitly Secretary Colby's position and supported it with strong arguments. The basis of the claim was that the United States had an interest in all that was won from Germany in the war, on the ground that if we had not joined in it Germany would not have been defeated and nothing would have been won. At no stage in the controversy had this point been disputed. If, therefore, we had the right to share in the fruits of victory, we still have them, since we have not signed the Treaty of Versailles.

He concluded that the whole mandate arrangements are not legal until the United States approves them and that Japan has no legal right to the islands assigned her. He asked the four nations to whom the notes were sent to take up the matter again and settle it in consultation with the United States. In sending this note he was careful to say that we seek no exclusive control over Yap, but that we only desire to obtain an arrangement by which all the nations that co-operated in defeating Germany shall have equal privileges in the territory taken from her.

Neither Secretary Colby nor Secretary Hughes has contended for a selfish policy in regard to Yap. Nor have they disputed the cession of the German islands north of the equator to Japan as a whole. They have insisted, with President Wilson, that Yap, which has no value except as a cable station, should be internationalized, which means that it should be placed under the joint control of the other nations. In one of the press dispatches from Tokio in regard to the matter it was stated that the Japanese sense of honor was hurt because we protested their ownership of Yap but had never protested German ownership or control. The reply is that we had no ground to protest against German control, since Germany bought the islands from Spain in 1899, along with the whole Caroline group. We feel that we have with other nations a joint claim in the islands, and what we ask is that Yap be used for the benefit of all, the United States and Japan included.

At present it is not possible to say what will be the outcome of Secretary

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explosion, went into the air and the last ready-made crossing place for the enemy ceased to exist.

Hardly an hour after this decisive event, relieving detachments of the Ninth Machine Gun Battalion, another Third Division unit, marched into Chateau-Thierry and occupied the positions vacated by their weary comrades of the Seventh, in some cases taking over even the guns because the latter were so hot from the heavy firing of the night that they could not be dismounted. The relieved troops moved at once over roads torn by shell fire to billets at Courboin.

In its momentous three-day battle the Seventh Machine Gun Battalion had suffered light losses considering the results it had achieved. One officer, Second Lieutenant Thomas W. Goddard, and four enlisted men were killed and thirty-two enlisted men wounded, nearly all of the casualties resulting from shell fire. At this cost, in a time of the greatest confusion and dismay and under the eyes of some of the best troops of the Old World in the ranks of both friend and foe, they had been a vital factor in holding the enemy back from the river crossings at the point which for some days was perhaps the most critical one on the entire Allied battle front of the Marne salient.

What's All This Yap Business About?

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Hughes's protest to the four allied powers. At this writing a reply has come from Italy accepting our views. Since she has taken no mandates under the Versailles Treaty and is interested in having all mandates administered for the benefit of all nations, it is to her advantage to support our position. A reply from France has been made public. It holds that the point raised is a matter for the consideration of all the allied powers, and it does not undertake to define the French position on the subject. No reply has been announced from Great Britain, but it is said that an answer has been received.

The position of the United States was first called the case of Yap. As the controversy has developed it is the case of all the mandates. Great Britain has assumed mandates in Africa, Mesopotamia and the South Pacific. France has assumed mandates in Africa and claims to exercise sphere of control in Syria. They are supposedly equally concerned with Japan in enforcing their theory of mandates. The manner in which Britain has promptly assumed the control of the oil fields in Mesopotamia, which Secretary Colby protested in a strong note on November 20th, 1920, shows that she is not inclined to consider a mandate as anything less than absolute ownership.

Secretary Hughes stands against this exclusive view. He will have the support of all nations not actually concerned in deriving profit from the narrow interpretation of a mandate. If he persists and gets the support of the people of the United States in his persistence, it is likely that he will force the three great powers who are taking mandates to agree to use them in behalf of a free and open door to the rest of the world. Small as the matter may seem it is one of the most important things that now lie before the world.



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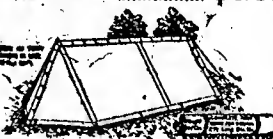
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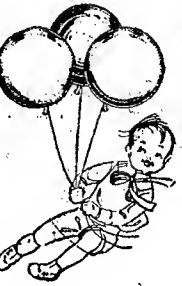


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